

Fire and Ice

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Summary: The people of Berk might have discovered Hiccup's powers over winter and deemed them harmless, but it seems that the boy's troubles are far from over. An unseasonable and unpredictable heat wave hits Berk suddenly, and Hiccup is forced to wonder whether he isn't the only one out there with unexplained abilities. Sequel to Gift or Curse?

1. Alone Time

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Chapter 1: Alone Time

**A/N: Well, for one, I decided to write a sequel to Gift or Curse. Obviously. This idea occurred to me as I was actually planning out my HTTYD2 fic, 'Shudder'. That one is quite angsty, and this one shall be no different, I promise. I promise the next chapter will be more eventful. Please read and review! **

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><p>Hiccup Horrendous Haddock awoke with a start in his darkened, freezing cold bedroom, soaked in sweat, his blanket discarded upon the floor. There was a very good reason as to why the room would have been so cold to anyone other than himself; ice coated the floor, walls, and door, surely sticking the side of the wooden door to its frame. A feeling of shame stole over him as he glanced around the wintry room, realizing what he must have done. It was not uncommon for him to have nightmares; he had them nearly every night, in fact,

but this was the first one that had been so terrifying that he had unwittingly used his powers and it was also the first one in which his father had appeared.<p>

He sat upright in bed as he thought of it, pulling the blanket back up onto the wooden frame with him. His father. The man who had never lost an opportunity to beat him, to berate him, had constantly reminded him to "conceal, don't feel". As the familiar phrase floated back to him, Hiccup glanced down at his hands, seeing the tinge of bright blue only now beginning to fade from his palms. He had iced the room very recently, then.

Knowing he was going to get no more sleep when thinking of the one man who had never failed to terrify him, Hiccup kicked the covers off, thawed the room as easily as if he had been doing it for years, and made his way downstairs carefully, as it was dark and he didn't want to light a candle. The ice, it appeared, had not only covered his entire room, but it had trailed out a bit through the crack between the bottom of the door and the wooden floor, because winter remnants lay in glittering trails all along the landing, a bit of snow on the stairs. Hiccup removed this as well before continuing on, putting one hand on the wall to keep himself going in the dark. Daybreak must have been near, the sky was a bit lighter than it would have been had it still been the dead of night, and there was no reason for him to give sleep another fruitless try. He was not getting much sleep these days; the constant barrage of endless nighttime terrors made it rather difficult to relax.

The worst part was that, every night, they were different, so he never quite knew what was going to happen that night when he lay down to sleep. He yawned, wiping at his tired eyes and reaching the tiny kitchen of his lonely, empty house and collapsing heavily in one of the chairs, resting an elbow on the table as he peered out at the dark blue sky.

Though he was loathe to admit it, Hiccup not only detested the nighttime, he loved the daytime, specifically the days in which he had company. Though his father was gone, his habits of isolating himself were proving difficult to break, and he was rarely ever the first to strike up a conversation with somebody. He lived for those times when he heard an unexpected knock on the door and found it was Astrid, or Gobber, or simply one of the villagers coming to call. With summer officially gone, autumn upon them and winter fast approaching, many people were already beseeching him to either give them a nice, cold winter or "for Thor's sake, don't freeze anybody!"

Hiccup rather thought that Mrs. Hofferson should have remembered that her daughter had unfrozen in the end, but he bit his tongue; it was, after all, his fault that she had frozen solid last summer, and he deserved whatever people threw at him for that.

The deep blue changed to a light purple, growing paler and paler the longer he sat there, until at last, he stood from his chair and once again regretting his loss of sleep, he walked into the living room and reached the front door.

Although his father had been gone for a few months, he still found it hard every morning to walk out, to remind himself that he wasn't forced to stay in here anymore. He glanced down at the fur gloves his

father had once tried to convince him to wear, and shuddered, checking surreptitiously over his shoulder to convince himself that the man wasn't anywhere near. Although he knew that the ex-chieftain of his island was long gone, and that he was very close to inheriting the island himself, once his uncle, Spitelout, felt that he was ready, the nightmares always made the boy feel on edge and jumpy. Fumbling with the door, he at last managed to pull it open, walking out into the weak dawn light, as the sun had not yet risen.

As Hiccup had expected, nobody was out much yet; a light breeze was stirring the air, but not much else was happening. He opened his hands, inspecting his palms again, still with the odd blue tint, though it was much less noticeable now that it had been quite a bit since he had last used his powers. He looked up at the sky once before heading into the forest, where he knew the trees would block it out. This was his reason for getting up so early, and getting out before anyone else was even awake: the alone time. If Hiccup didn't get up at such an hour, he would never have had so much as a second on his own. He was constantly getting hassled by Spitelout, who seemed to think that every hour of the day should be devoted to learning how to be a chief — not to mention the highly unusual factor of his uncle teaching him, instead of his father, the way it should have been. And, when he wasn't working with Spitelout, little kids were swarming him, begging to see his powers, to give them just a little bit of snow so they could have a snowball fight, or make a snowman. Hiccup found he never had the heart to refuse, and often ended up playing with them, at least until Spitelout caught them again.

He reached the first few trees of the forest, quickening his pace now, jumping over tree roots and cracking twigs, taking a path that he knew well. The path to the private little cove he had once loved to visit, before his father insisted on keeping him shut up all the time. Before the chieftain had told him he was dangerous, a monster. Hiccup's serene smile faded when he remembered that, but he pushed it away. He had thought too much of the bad things this morning, and now it was time to focus on the good. Squeezing in between two enormous boulders, he emerged into the clearing and, without waiting for anything, without pausing to appreciate the beauty that he had admired a million times before, he raised his hands, flexed his fingers, and brought forth his power.

The glittering snow fell obediently, coating the fresh green grass in pure white powder. He slid down a bit farther, giving the rocks a covering of frost. But the best part was the one he saved for the very last. This was his favorite time of day, the time when he felt truly free to use his power, without fear of hurting anyone or being beaten for it. He ran to the edge of the lake, took a deep breath, summoned the power and ran out onto the water, effortlessly supporting himself with ice sheets in the shape of snowflakes. Hiccup ran around the length of the murky green lake in this manner, freezing the water and turning it the same pure, sparkling white of the snow and frost. The ice cascaded down, below the first covering, freezing almost all the water within. If he fell, there would be another layer of ice to catch him, thicker and stronger than the top.

Hiccup went skidding across the shiny white surface before he managed to catch himself, sit down on the frozen, snow-covered grass, and manifest himself a pair of skates, made entirely of the ice he would

be skating on, which would assure him extra balance when he stood. Pushing slowly forward with first one skate, and then the other, Hiccup found it to be easier than the last two times he had tried this, both of which he had promptly fallen over. It was easier to stay upright this time, and by the time the sun had risen for real, he had only fallen down once. He picked himself up off the ice, dusted himself off and skated over to the other edge of the bank, vanishing the skates and replacing them with the boots he had fashioned for himself just that summer.

Breathing deeply through nose and mouth, he once again climbed to the top of the rock formation, squeezed in between the boulders and started back towards the village, the sky brightening steadily above him.

2. Sunrises, Tricks and Apologies

Fire and Ice

The people of Berk might have discovered Hiccup's powers over winter and deemed them harmless, but it seems that the boy's troubles are far from over. An unseasonable and unpredictable heat wave hits Berk suddenly, and Hiccup is forced to wonder whether he isn't the only one out there with unexplained abilities.

Chapter 2: Sunrises, Tricks and Apologies

**A/N: GUYS I AM SO SO SO SO SO SORRY I ABANDONED THIS NO I SERIOUSLY AM I'M SORRY *sob* PLEASE FORGIVE ME PLEASE DON'T HATE ME NO I'M SERIOUS JUST LISTEN TO ME I WILL MAKE IT UP TO YOU! **

**Now that that's out of the way, if there are any readers left of course, I just have one thing to say: chapter 3 will be up SOONER. I will NEVER leave this story for seven months again D: I'm so sorry. I really WILL try and make it up to you guys. Also, I really loved writing Hiccup and Astrid's interaction in this chapter for some reason xD they're ridiculously fun, with his adorable crush on her. Is it okay to think he's adorable in this fic? He's basically male Elsa xD **

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><p>The sun was coloring the sky in beautiful hues of pink and gold, and the new sunlight was filtering through the branches of the trees around him, while the first few birds started singing in the trees, their joyous song carrying back to Hiccup. The only sound he made was the constant thumping of his boots as he put one foot in front of the other. It would have been a glorious morning, had he not had an odd, unsettled feeling in the pit of his stomach—almost as if he were being watched.<p>

In fact, that's exactly what it felt like. He kept glancing around, his eyes sliding from side-to-side, in search of the culprit, but there was no one there. He drew in a deep, shaky breath, telling himself it was just leftover from the nightmare. Who else would have been awake and in the forest at that time? As far as he knew, he was the only person who even cared to venture this far in. Most Vikings preferred to stay close to the village, and close to light and warmth and other people, but Hiccup was not most Vikings. The ice that could

come streaming from his fingertips, and his scrawny body, and his clever mind all proved that. He put a hand on his head, trying to smooth down his hair so his uncle wouldn't see it. For some reason, Spitelout was not all that keen on Hiccup having messy hair.

He turned slowly on the spot, the hairs on the back of his neck standing straight up. He could have sworn there was something right behind him, something big, but it was all deserted shrubbery, as far as the eye could see. The grass sparkled with early morning dew, and the sky above was quickly growing ever brighter. Hiccup stood there for a second longer, enormously unnerved, before shaking himself and beginning to walk resolutely toward the village again.

"Get a grip, you idiot," he chastised himself under his breath as he walked, at last emerging with some relief, although he would never admit it from the last line of trees and into the safety of the village streets. As he expected, nobody was up yet, or at least not many people. His uncle Spitelout, much to his chagrin, was already up and about, but Astrid was, too, and she gave him a smile as she passed. "You've been up early," she observed, setting her bucket down on the ground to talk with him. "Where have you been?"

"The forest." As always when he was around her, Hiccup felt his heart speeding up, for no apparent reason at all. It hammered in his chest like he had just run a couple thousand miles, and his throat felt as dry as if he had, too. He prayed that he wouldn't stutter when he spoke next. "What have you been doing?" He held out a hand to offer his assistance with the water bucket, but Astrid, understanding, waved him away. Her nose wrinkled in confusion.

"The forest?" she questioned, her braid swinging with her as she turned away from the bucket to look at him. "What were you doing, hiding from Spitelout? He never goes in there anyway, so you're safe. He hasn't noticed your absence yet." She winked when she finished speaking.

Hiccup wondered if he was forgetting how to swallow, or if it was always this warm on Berk in autumn. "Um—y-yeah. Hiding from Spitelout."

More than anything, Astrid seemed to find Hiccup's complete reluctance to be chief amusing, but only because she didn't realize how deep that reluctance went. He just knew that the instant the village was in his care, he would screw it up. He would start another eternal winter, or he would find that the people were asking things of him that he couldn't give. Or he would start a war with another tribe. He would misuse his powers. He would be an even worse man than his father had been.

His stomach clenched in fear when he remembered his nightmare, the real reason he had been in the forest. But of course, Astrid wasn't to know that. As far as he was concerned, Astrid didn't need to know anything about the last ten years, ever since his mom had died when he was four. That was when his father had started hitting him, blaming him for his mother's death, as she had died in a blizzard. Just the memories made him shiver with fear.

"Are you okay?" Astrid's blue eyes, deep and beautiful as the sea,

looked into his, her brow knitting with concern.

Hiccup shook himself. Were his emotions showing on his face? Gobber used to tease him by telling him that his face was like an open book, but he liked to think he was pretty good at hiding things when he needed to. If she could see his feelings in his expression, he didn't know what kind of expression he would make when thinking about his father. Fear, a lot of fear. Maybe a little sadness, too. And—|and anger.

"Yeah," he finally managed, brushing his hair out of his eyes. "I'm—|I'm fine." He looked up and away from her at exactly the wrong moment: his uncle was currently scanning the crowd, maybe in search of him, maybe not.

"Oh, no," he muttered, as he was of the opinion that his uncle couldn't teach him to be chief if he could never find him, and thus tried to avoid interactions like these as often as he could. "I think I've been spotted."

"By Spitelout?" Astrid's lips twitched before she picked up the water bucket with apparent ease.

"Please let me carry that," Hiccup begged. "Maybe he'll think I'm helping out, and not distracting you from your work or whatever."

"Oh, alright. Walk me home, and we can pretend we're discussing the yak herd that's been getting sick recently. C'mon." She shoved the bucket into his hands, slopping a bit of water down the front of his armor, and then, to take matters worse, grabbed him by the wrist, physically dragging him down the street.

When they approached his uncle, Astrid raised her voice just enough to be heard. "Yes, that poor yak—|it's absolutely dreadful, really, and I completely agree with you. Something ought to be done about it. Personally, I think going to Gothi is an excellent idea. Don't you agree, Hiccup?"

"Um—|" Hiccup was busy trying to balance the water with his one free hand, which was no easy task at the best of times, but his brain was going haywire over the fact that Astrid was still holding his wrist, and he was not doing his best thinking.

She coaxed him into action with a punch on the shoulder. To her, it was quite light, but it caused Hiccup to spill a little more of the water, and it fell into the street. Spitelout glared at them, and the boy flushed, trying to hitch the bucket more securely into his arms. "Right, right," he forced himself to speak as Astrid led him away, but he was gripping the bucket rather tightly, and he could feel his palm growing cold. "You're, um—|absolutely right?"

As soon as they were out of earshot, Astrid turned to him, giving him a triumphant smile. "I think we fooled him. For now. He'll probably be looking for you soon, but I predict I've won you at least forty minutes. Use them wisely."

"Uh—|will do?" He raised his brows hopefully at her as they arrived on her front step, trying to understand the strange mixture of nervousness and giddiness welling up in him when he noticed she still

hadn't let him go.

"Yep, this is my stop," she nodded at him cheerfully, making to tug the bucket from his hand.

He was about to hand it off to her when he caught sight of the inside and groaned. The inside was now filled with clear, sparkling white ice. He could feel his cheeks heating as Astrid took the bucket from him and examined it, her lips pressed tightly together.

"I-I can try to melt it," he blurted apologetically, when it seemed she truly wasn't going to speak. "I'm sorry. I'll try and melt it, but turning it back into water is a little trickier than just v-vanishing it completely andâ€¦I'm sorry." He hoped she wouldn't question why the bucket was filled to the brim with ice â€" in truth, he had been so nervous about her hand on his wrist that he hadn't really been thinking about controlling his powers. He should have been paying more attention. He was always screwing up things like that. Couldn't he do anything right?

He fell silent when she lifted her head to look at him. He kept expecting her to sigh or make a snide comment, or hand him the bucket â€" instead, to his amazement, she smiled. "I guess it's another walk to the well for me."

Hiccup could hardly believe his ears. "You'reâ€¦you're not mad?"

Astrid's smile only grew, until it became a laugh. "What do you want? Do you want me to demand a public whipping for giving me some ice? Heck, no. I'll chip it out and save it. Our family can always use more. It's just one more trip to the well, and I make these trips all the time." She turned in the direction of the town's water. "Walk with me?"

End
file.